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PROPOSED PROGRAMME BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM 1994-1995

Office accommodation in Geneva

Report of the Secretary-General

INTRODUCTION

1. The issue of space at the United Nations Office at Geneva has become critical. Departments and offices, such as the Department for Humanitarian Affairs and the Centre for Human Rights, have immediate requirements owing to their increased level of activities. Additionally, the transfer to Geneva of staff associated with the transnational corporations, science and technology for development and the International Conference on the Former Yugoslavia, has exacerbated the pressure on the current facilities at Geneva. Requirements for new space, submitted by other existing offices within the United Nations Office at Geneva, have also been identified and their needs verified by the Office of General Services. There simply is no possibility of coping with the many valid requests for office space which are being received from the many United Nations entities operating at Geneva without an expansion in the overall space available.

2. This report will attempt to address the existing space allocation problems, including the immediate and long-term requirements for space by the various United Nations organizations; detail already planned movements of United Nations organizations based on existing and approved space; and provide a suggested course of action to alleviate the space shortages outlined, including the estimated cost implications.

3. Part of the short-term space requirements of the United Nations Office at Geneva can be met by planned renovations to existing structures. The ability to meet the full estimated space requirements, however, depends on the provision of additional space by the Swiss authorities, with whom discussions have been undertaken.

4. Even with the proposals set forth in this document to cover immediate requirements, it is evident that additional longer-term requirements exist. The Swiss authorities have requested the United Nations Office at Geneva to provide them with a description of anticipated needs both in the short and long term. This information has been provided to them for their review and further discussions should follow.

I. EXISTING OFFICE SPACE AND REQUIREMENTS FOR ADDITIONAL SPACE

5. The current situation of offices with urgent requirements for office space is summarized in the table below:

	Current allocation	Additional requirement (Square metres)	Total requirement
(a) Department for Humanitarian Affairs	2 683	567	3 250
(b) Centre for Human Rights	2 378	1 672	4 050
(c) Joint Inspection Unit	700	313	1 013
(d) Two units of the Department for Policy Coordination and Sustainable Development	429	2 098	2 527
(e) International Conference on the Former Yugoslavia		1 276	1 276
(f) United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) (new units)		940	940
(g) United Nations Compensation Commission	740	1 560	2 300
(h) United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)	3 315	785	4 100
(i) Commission of Experts (Established by Security Council resolution 780 (1992))		160	160
(j) Additional requirements for other existing offices		1 300	1 300
TOTAL	10 245	10 671	20 916
Required by September 1994			
Owing to partial demolition of Petit-Saconnex			2 000 a/
Required in the long term			
Owing to total demolition of Petit-Saconnex complex		5 500	5 500
GRAND TOTAL		16 171	28 416

a/ This space requirement is due to be offset by an equivalent surface which will be available at the William Rappard Centre upon the departure of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR).

The details of these requirements are shown below:

(a) The Department for Humanitarian Affairs presently occupies 1,783 square metres in the Palais des Nations and 900 square metres at the Petit-Saconnex for a total of 2,683 square metres. Its units are scattered throughout the buildings. According to the request made by the Department, the present total requirements amount to 3,250 square metres;

(b) The Centre for Human Rights which occupies 2,378 square metres in the Palais, has a requirement for additional space for its increased activities and staff. Moreover, the Centre has repeatedly expressed the urgent need for space for a library and documentation centre. The total space required to house the entire activity of the Centre is 4,050 square metres;

(c) The Joint Inspection Unit has moved, effective 1 September 1993, to the Geneva Executive Centre. It had occupied 700 square metres on the fifth floor of the "D" building. The space which they have vacated in the Palais will be made available to the Centre for Human Rights;

(d) Two units of the Department for Policy Coordination and Sustainable Development, namely the secretariats of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee for a Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Committee to Combat Desertification, will be completely relocated to Geneva. All staff will be accommodated in the premises of the United Nations Office at Geneva and will require 2,527 square metres. It is currently occupying 429 square metres at the Petit-Saconnex;

(e) The International Conference on the Former Yugoslavia has been installed at the Palais on an ad hoc basis. Space has been allocated to the Conference by compressing other units and by placing their personnel in space usually reserved for conferences. Replacement space amounting to 1,276 square metres is needed;

(f) The United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, Geneva, now includes support staff for science and technology for development and for transnational corporations (from the former Department for Economic and Social Development), representing an increase in staff of 47 persons. This figure does not include other extrabudgetary staff; in other words, at least 60 people will be in need of office space amounting to approximately 940 square metres of additional space;

(g) The Secretariat of the United Nations Compensation Commission is installed in the villa "La Pelouse", where it occupies 740 square metres. By the end of 1993, its staff will have increased in number from 21 to 48 with the total reaching 60 staff members during 1994. Furthermore, the number of files for applications for compensation has already reached 780,000 and is increasing, which means that a large area for the storage and management of these documents will be required. An additional area of some 1,560 square metres of office space is needed to provide the Commission with proper facilities for its work;

(h) UNICEF presently rents a total area of 3,315 square metres from the United Nations Office at Geneva at the Petit-Saconnex. Owing to the increased

number of staff and expanded commercial operations, UNICEF now has a total requirement of 4,100 square metres;

(i) The Commission of Experts established pursuant to Security Council resolution 780 (1992), established in 1992, is housed in the Palais at the expense of other units which have been relocated on a temporary basis into space reserved for conferences or compressed into other smaller areas. Replacement space amounting to 160 square metres is needed;

(j) Apart from the requirements attributed to newly arrived offices and current expanding activities, other units, such as the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR), the United Nations Volunteers and various administrative services, have filed requests for office space representing a total of some 1,300 square metres.

6. In the longer run, a part of the Petit-Saconnex complex, equivalent to some 2,000 square metres, will have to be vacated by September 1994 as the Swiss authorities intend to demolish it. As a result, an additional 2,000 square metres will be required by that date. It is anticipated, however, that the relocation of the High Commissioner for Refugees from the Centre William Rappard to the Montbrillant building in early 1994, will make an equivalent space available for the United Nations Office at Geneva at the Centre. Finally, the remainder of the Petit-Saconnex offices will also have to be surrendered to the Swiss authorities, at a date not yet defined but in any case not before 1998, thus resulting in an additional 5,500 square metres required by that time.

II. PROPOSALS TO DEAL WITH SPACE REQUIREMENTS

7. As a result of negotiations carried out with the Swiss authorities, some space has been made available at the Geneva Executive Centre, a building managed by the Fondation des immeubles pour les organisations internationales, (FIPOI). The Geneva Executive Centre is located on Avenue du Pailly, 5 minutes from the airport and 15 minutes from the downtown area of the city. The total area for office space is 13,504 square metres.

8. Of the above area, a total of 6,416 square metres has been made available by FIPOI to the United Nations Office at Geneva for its immediate space requirements. Of this area and as a result of negotiations with the Swiss authorities, 1,276 square metres can be made available free of charge as a replacement for space currently occupied by the International Conference on the Former Yugoslavia in the Palais des Nations. In addition another 2,527 square metres for the installation of the units of the Department for Policy Coordination and Sustainable Development can also be made available free of charge. The remaining additional space of 2,613 square metres has been made available at a privileged rental rate (including charges) of SwF 268 per square metre per year (SwF 243 for rental and SwF 25 for charges). This rate is approximately half the prevailing commercial rates of SwF 500 per square metre per year.

9. In addition to the above space that can be made available to the United Nations, 5,574 square metres are currently occupied by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP).

10. Of the total area of 3,803 square metres, 1,013 square metres have been occupied by the Joint Inspection Unit since 1 September 1993. It is proposed that an additional 2,527 square metres be used for the installation of the units of the Department for Policy Coordination and Sustainable Development, thus leaving 263 square metres of space free of charge still to be assigned.

11. The area of 2,613 square metres that would be provided at a privileged rental rate would accommodate some of the offices that require additional space.

12. The relocation/consolidation of the Department for Policy Coordination and Sustainable Development in the Geneva Executive Centre would thus vacate space in the Petit-Saconnex (429 square metres), which would be allocated to the Department for Humanitarian Affairs, thus solving most of their total additional needs of 567 square metres. UNICEF's requirements of 4,100 square metres could be accommodated by using 2,000 square metres available at the Geneva Executive Centre at a concessional rent and retaining 2,100 square metres at the Petit-Saconnex. UNICEF's total requirement would therefore be fulfilled. At the same time, their release of some 1,215 square metres at the Petit-Saconnex would provide rent-free space which could then be allocated to the units for science and technology for development and transnational corporations, the Department for Humanitarian Affairs remaining needs and part of the growth of other existing offices. UNICEF would be charged the privileged rental rate at the Geneva Executive Centre.

13. However, it is evident that splitting UNICEF between two locations is not the optimal solution and discussions will continue with the Fund and with the Swiss authorities on a longer term solution and on whether to proceed in this manner in the meantime. Alternative uses for the space at the Geneva Executive Centre are also being explored.

14. In order to implement the proposals outlined above, alteration work will need to be carried out on the following buildings:

(a) Remodelling at the Petit-Saconnex

It is proposed to remodel the premises formerly occupied by UNEP following its move to the Geneva Executive Centre;

(b) Remodelling of the ground floor in the "D" building and relocation of workshop;

In the light of the increased activities of the human rights programme, provision of additional space as well as the establishment of a research and documentation centre has become necessary. It is proposed to convert the craftsmen's workshop, 320 square metres, into office space to be made available to the Centre for Human Rights. The remodelling of the ground floor in the "D" building with the consequent relocation of the workshop would be a more rational use of available space within the existing Palais buildings. However, this

will entail remodelling of the operations, such as alterations to partitions and floors, painting, electrical installations and cable-laying;

(c) Rehousing of workshop

In order to recover the space occupied by the workshop on the ground floor of the "D" building and rehouse the workshop, a large construction shed would need to be erected;

(d) La Pelouse

At the request of the United Nations Compensation Commission, a survey was made to explore the possibility of using the La Pelouse annex and converting the facility into office space. This would result in the availability of an additional 1,560 square metres of space to be placed at the disposal of the Commission which, on the expiry of the Commissions's mandate, would return to the United Nations Office at Geneva. The financing of the work would be covered by the United Nations Compensation Commission. At the end of 1994, if the work on remodelling the La Pelouse annex is carried out as requested, the Commission will have its required space of 2,300 square metres.

15. As mentioned in paragraph 5 of the present document, the total additional square metres of space required in the near term is 10,671 square metres, most of which would be met through implementation of the following proposed plans:

(a) Occupying 6,416 square metres within the Geneva Executive Centre;

(b) Renovating 1,560 square metres of the La Pelouse annex;

(c) Remodelling for relocation and consolidation of the offices on the ground floor of the "D" building at the Palais and related construction of a shed measuring 320 square metres for the workshops.

As a result of all the above actions, an additional 8,296 square metres will have been made available thus leaving a shortfall of 2,375 square metres as follows:

	Square metres
Total immediate requirement	10 671
Less: Space available at the Geneva Executive Centre	(6 416)
Remodelling the "D" building	(320)
Remodelling the La Pelouse annex	(1 560)
Remaining requirements	2 375

16. On or after 1998 additional square metres totalling 5,500 may be required owing to the expected complete demolition of the Petit-Saconnex premises. It is anticipated that as a part of the ongoing process of negotiations with the Swiss authorities, additional office space would be made available when required. The Secretary-General would propose to report further to the General Assembly on this process of negotiation as appropriate.

17. These proposals will have an immediate impact on the regular budget. Over the longer run, however, they will realize substantial savings compared with the only feasible alternative, which is commercial renting of additional space. Over a five-year period, the estimated costs of renting 3,803 square metres (i.e. space made available free of charge at the Geneva Executive Centre) of office space at commercial rates (SwF 500 per square metre per year), would amount to approximately $6 million. Additionally, as regards the 2,613 square metres to be provided for at privileged rental rates (estimated at SwF 268 per square metre per year versus SwF 500 per square metre per year for commercial rates), a savings of approximately $2 million would be realized over a five-year period if the United Nations opts to accept this privileged rate from the Swiss authorities rather than commercial leasing. In either case, costs such as security and cleaning services would accrue whatever space was secured.

III. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS FOR THE REGULAR BUDGET

18. Based on the proposals described above, the non-recurrent financial implications for the remainder of the regular budget of the United Nations is estimated as follows:

	1993 (United States dollars)
(a) Geneva Executive Centre (installation/remodelling)	546 000
(b) Petit-Saconnex remodelling	200 000
(c) "D" building ground floor renovations	157 300
(d) Rehousing workshops (construction)	595 000
(e) La Pelouse annex (renovations at an estimated cost of $2.4 million would be borne by the United Nations Compensation Commission)	
Total	1 498 300

19. The estimated cost of remodelling the space to be occupied in the Geneva Executive Centre is $546,000. Negotiations have been carried out with the Swiss Government and an agreement has been reached whereby the Swiss Government would

meet the costs of the installation work at the Geneva Executive Centre or undertake such remodelling work themselves up to the total of $546,000. Therefore, the non-recurrent installation costs at the Geneva Executive Centre would be free of charge to the United Nations.

20. As regards the remaining requirements for the other three projects, that is the Petit-Saconnex remodelling ($200,000), the "D" building renovations ($157,000) and the rehousing of the workshops ($595,000) the total estimated costs are projected at $952,300. It is anticipated, even at this stage in the biennium, that some of this amount could be met through savings projected under section 35, Construction, alteration, improvement and major maintenance, of the programme budget for the biennium 1992-1993.

Recurrent requirements in 1994-1995

21. As far as the costs for maintenance of premises as a result of the relocation of offices to the Geneva Executive Centre are concerned, additional operating costs will be incurred in 1994-1995. These costs are estimated at $1,354,000 as shown below and have been included in section 25H, Administration and management, United Nations Office at Geneva, of the proposed programme budget for biennium 1994-1995:

(a) Two General Service (Other level) posts to perform the functions of telephone operator and telephone technician/system operator;

(b) An amount of $180,000 for general temporary assistance and overtime for security arrangements;

(c) An amount of $872,200 for general operating expenses, broken down as follows:

(i) $230,000 for utilities (electricity, water, fuel);

(ii) $436,200 for rental of telephone lines, maintenance and traffic;

(iii) $206,000 for miscellaneous services (cleaning services and insurance).

IV. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

22. As a result of the critical office space situation in Geneva, additional accommodations have been located through the assistance of the Swiss authorities in a building called the Geneva Executive Centre. In addition, the United Nations Office at Geneva has identified other projects that would help to alleviate the current space problem. In this connection, the General Assembly may wish to approve the Secretary-General's proposal to accept the offer of the Swiss authorities of rent-free and concessional space at the Geneva Executive Centre. Although this will involve additional expenditure under the regular budget, it is clearly more favourable than the only available alternative of commercially rented facilities.

23. In addition, in order to provide for the renovation work to be carried out for both the Geneva Executive Centre and the other projects, resources amounting to $952,300 are required. It is proposed to use resources made available through the postponement and cancellation of certain alterations and renovations in the 1992-1993 programme budget, to the extent that some of the projects could be initiated before the end of the biennium. For those that cannot be initiated by the end of the current biennium, it is proposed to undertake a review of all projects proposed to be carried out in Geneva from 1994 to 1995 under section 30, Construction, alteration, improvement and major maintenance, of the proposed programme budget and to make adjustments accordingly.